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Message from the Mayor

Earlier this week during Black History Month, we officially launched another one of our city's unique heritage trails - the African American Heritage Trail.

This heritage trail is a walking tour guide designed to teach residents and visitors about our city's rich tapestry of historic neighborhoods. While our National Mall and its museums play a vital role in the Nation's Capital, our neighborhoods are the real lifeblood of our city - and heritage trails serve to highlight neighborhoods and draw much-needed attention to them.

I joined other members of our community Tuesday at the Recorder of Deeds building in Northwest for the official launch of the trail. For two years, the African American Heritage Trail has existed as a free guide listing 98 prominent sites organized in 15 neighborhood walking or driving tours. It also has an online database listing more than 200 sites and is searchable by keyword, topic, and neighborhood.

But now, trail sites are receiving plaques explaining their historic significance. In addition to the Recorder of Deeds building, other buildings will soon display markers, including the Black Fashion Museum, Ebenezer United Methodist Church, the Alain Locke Residence, and the former Nichols Avenue Elementary School. The Recorder of Deeds building, at 515 D Street, was chosen because African Americans served as recorders of deeds since President James A. Garfield appointed Frederick Douglass in 1881.

What better way to close out Black History Month 2006 than by celebrating this heritage trail? The trail is the result of a partnership among the US Department of Interior, the DC Office of Planning, the DC Historic Preservation Office, Cultural Tourism DC, and members of our community.

It's easy to forget how much of a wellspring our city is when it comes to African American history. The District has produced African American leaders for the city and the nation. And they include:

- Poets Paul Laurence Dunbar and Langston Hughes,
- Duke Ellington, who created his magical sounds in schools, churches, and jazz clubs around U Street,
- Ella Fitzgerald, who won an important early talent show at the Howard Theater.

This heritage trail is one of several in our city. Just last month, we unveiled the Adams Morgan Heritage Trail. We're currently planning heritage trails in Shaw and Mount Pleasant as well.

The bottom line is that this is a key step forward in preserving and enhancing the important historic features of the District of Columbia.

For more information on all of our heritage trails, please visit culturaltourismdc.org.



AGENCY WEBSITES

Department of Human
Services

Office of Tax and
Revenue

Department of Parks and
Recreation

Department of
Employment Services

Metropolitan Police
Department

Office of Boards and
Commissions

Commission on the Arts
and Humanities

LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Hands on DC

DC Convention and
Tourism

DC Public Library

Federal Grant Awarded for Adolescent Treatment Coordination

On February 22, I was pleased to hold my weekly press briefing in Congress Heights at the DC Department of Health's Office of Prevention and Youth Services (OPYS), a division of APRA - the Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration. I was there to make two special announcements.

First, I'm pleased that the District is one of 16 states to receive a \$1.2 million three-year grant from the federal government for youth substance treatment services, with the funds directed toward OPYS. Second, I announced the first-ever citywide town hall meeting on underage drinking to be held on Tuesday, March 28, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Sumner School.

OPYS is the city government's hub for substance abuse prevention services focused for the most part on children and young people. The staff at OPYS design and plan substance abuse prevention activities and also work on awarding prevention grants to neighborhood-based community organizations.

As the intake center for young people who need substance abuse treatment, OPYS sees young people who are referred by other District agencies or by neighborhood organizations or who walk in on their own seeking help. After an assessment by staff, these young people are then referred to community-based treatment providers.

While the hardworking staff is making progress, we have significant challenges ahead of us. In 2005, nearly one in four District senior high school students said that they'd ridden in a car with a driver who had been drinking - and 23 percent of our young people describe themselves as "current drinkers." The town hall meeting will bring us together to discuss this critical issue.

Furthermore, treatment for young people with substance abuse problems is often spread across several government agencies that too often do not coordinate their services. These children need help, and they need it now. The new federal grant funds will help us improve coordination among our city's youth treatment programs through cross-training, improved communication, strategic planning and better resource allocation.

To reach that goal, we'll tap the resources of a newly funded DC Youth Treatment Coordination (YTC) Project. The project will help us build and expand working and referral relationships among key District agencies - including the Departments of Mental Health and Youth Rehabilitation Services, the Child and Family Services Agency, DC public and charter schools and Court Social Services.

It will also establish a strategy for youth substance abuse treatment; institute an annual planning and budgeting cycle; work to maintain or expand existing service levels; improve the quality of care; address systems level barriers; and fill service gaps.

For more information about OPYS, please visit: app.doh.dc.gov/services/administration_offices/apr/svc_prevention.shtm.

A New Postmaster for the District of Columbia

On February 17, I was honored to induct the District's 40th Postmaster, Yverne Patrice Moore, at the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum.

Both of my parents were dedicated postal workers for more than 30 years. I am a firm believer in the importance of our US Postal Service and our local postal workers. I understand well the dedication and service our postal workers bring to their work every day.

In our city alone, there's a small "army" of postal employees scattered throughout our neighborhoods, bringing you your mail every day with efficiency and reliability. It might sound like a small thing, but it's not - and we shouldn't take it for granted.

Yverne Patrice Moore will be responsible for 300,000 customers and 2,300 employees in 62 postal units who deliver approximately 1.8 million pieces of mail every day. She is more than qualified to oversee postal operations for our city. Ms. Moore was the Capital District Marketing Manager and Manager of Operations Support in the District before her appointment as Postmaster.

She also recently headed up a team that improved postal efficiency in the District of Columbia, and that effort has benefited all who live and work in our city.

Finally, Ms. Moore has played a large role in the city's recovery from the 2001 anthrax attacks, which took the lives of two postal workers at the Brentwood Facility. My mother and I took these attacks very personally, because we feel that all postal workers are members of our extended family.

As Mayor, I'd like to again wish Ms. Moore the best of luck in her new position as DC's 40th postmaster. She will be an excellent asset to our city in our continuing efforts to improve services for all residents.



Protecting Our City's Vital Communications Services

There's been a lot of attention across the United States devoted to the potential that Blackberry handheld e-mail services will be shut down due to a patent dispute. Last week, I took time to reassure District residents that city services will not be affected in any way by the high stakes patent infringement suit against Blackberry owner Research In Motion (RIM).

The potential shutdown of millions of government and private sector Blackberry devices has fueled speculation that an adverse court ruling could spark communication chaos.

In 2002, when our city began modernizing its instant communication systems, we chose a different messaging software solution, Good Technology's GoodLink.

Many of us - including myself - have come to rely on handheld instant messaging devices that we carry with us at all times. Namely in emergency situations, these handheld devices are essential for quick and reliable communication between me and my staff and our city's top managers.

The District provides handheld devices for its mobile workers and top executives. Approximately seven percent of the District workforce (more than 1,300 individuals) carry handheld units.

Our Chief Technology Officer, Suzanne Peck, and her staff positioned us well by conducting a thorough investigation when they chose our messaging software technology in 2002. They found that our requirements were best met by GoodLink. Thanks to their careful scrutiny of the options at the time, we don't have to worry about the Blackberry software issue.

From 2002 to 2005, staff at the District's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) worked to unify and modernize email for the city's 20,000 users. What was once a jumble of separate, incompatible messaging systems has become a unified, high-tech messaging environment that carries 1 million messages per day.

When OCTO evaluated messaging software technologies, the agency developed 35 separate feature requirements designed to ensure ease of use, user choice of devices, high reliability, strong security and cost-effective remote administration. GoodLink was the only solution that met the requirements.

Our New Department of the Environment Gets Rolling

On Earth Day last year I was happy to announce the launch of an initiative for our city to create a stand-alone Department of the Environment. And on February 14, I took the first step in getting the department rolling by appointing my senior environmental advisor, Elizabeth Berry, to serve as the department's acting director.

As I said last year, it's high time that the Nation's Capital has a Department of the Environment to ensure that our natural environment is clean and healthy for our city's residents and our millions of visitors. This innovative new department will tackle the many challenges we face in our city when it comes to preserving our environment.

That means a focused approach on a range of critical issues, including:

- Improving air quality across our city;
- Improving the condition of our city's rivers and streams;
- And improving our parks and open spaces for everyone in our city.

Here in Washington, our booming economic development has been a blessing for our flourishing economy. But, as development surges, we face new challenges - and a coordinated effort by a new DC Department of the Environment can help us face those challenges head-on.

In serving as my senior advisor for environmental affairs for the past five years, Elizabeth Berry has been behind the effort to create the Department of the Environment every step of the way. She is passionate about the environment and will work to make sure that the department is up and running as soon as possible.

The bottom line is that having one department that is solely focused on the environment will enable the District government to operate more efficiently as we work to improve the city's air quality and the health of our rivers and streams.

For a full biography of Ms. Berry, please visit the Mayor's Corner of the DC.Gov website at: dc.gov/mayor/news/release.asp?id=854&mon=200602.



District Activities



Mayor Williams helps out at the groundbreaking ceremony for residential and retail development at the former Camp Simms National Guard facility east-of-the-river in Congress Heights. The development will include 75 single family homes and a retail center anchored by a 66,000 square foot Giant Food and pharmacy combination, scheduled to open in spring 2007.



Mayor Williams delivers remarks at the African American Heritage Trail plaque unveiling at the District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds building. He is pictured with Frederick Douglass IV, a direct descendant of Frederick Douglass.



Mayor Anthony Williams delivers remarks at the launch of the "We Can-Together" childhood obesity prevention program. Joining Mayor Williams is Gilbert Arenas of the Washington Wizards and Irene Pollin.

Community News

- [Senate Subcommittee Members Hear Testimony on Enhancing Educational and Economic Opportunities in DC](#)
- [Mayor Williams Joins Library Officials and Students at Launch of New Online Tutoring and Reference Services at the DC Public Library](#)
- [Congress Heights Hosts Groundbreaking Ceremony for Largest Giant Food Store in DC](#)

Upcoming Events

[View All News Releases](#)

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| 3/14 | Ward 5 Town Hall Forum: <i>Violence Against Women</i>
6 pm – 8 pm
Trinity University - O'Connor Auditorium
125 Michigan Avenue, NE |
| 3/18 | DC Superior Court Community Courts Forum
9 am – 12 pm
Kelly Miller Middle School Auditorium
301 49th Street, NE
For further info call (202) 879-4893 |
| 3/28 | Town Hall Meeting: <i>Preventing Underage Alcohol Use</i>
10 am – 12 pm
Sumner School & Archives Museum
1201 17th Street, NW |

